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## **The limits of covert action: SAS operations during 'Confrontation', 1964-66.**

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An aura of mystique continues to surround Special Forces. Government restrictions on the availability of information on such units; involvement periodically in high profile operations; combined with a plethora of popular works focusing on their challenging training and heroism against the odds, has tended to result in a degree of mythologising of these units.<sup>1</sup> This is no more so than for 22 Regiment, the Special Air Service (SAS), Britain's key Special Forces unit. Of course, the mythologising of Special Forces itself serves a purpose for governments, enhancing the deterrence and coercive effects of the military instrument. But it is also dangerous. In general, Special Forces have bucked the trend in the decline in the size of western militaries because they seem especially useful in the current threat environment. But an unquestioning acceptance of the positive popular view of such forces risks the danger that there is a lack of understanding of the limitations of such forces and that, in consequence, too much is expected of them. As one author notes 'Elite units ... offer politicians in democracies both a tool of policy and a source of fantasy'.<sup>2</sup>

This article examines the performance of the SAS in a campaign of secret cross-border activities, known as Operation Claret, conducted in Borneo against Indonesia from 1964-66, during the undeclared war known as 'Confrontation'. Though much less well known than British operations during the Malayan Emergency of 1948-60, the war appeared in the end to be equally successful for Britain and the SAS, in particular, seemed to play a crucial role. Major General Sir Walter Walker, the British commander in Borneo during the key period from 1962 to early 1965, argued that a squadron of SAS (around 70 men) were 'as valuable to him as seven hundred infantry in the roles of hearts and minds, border surveillance, early warning stay behind, and eyes and ears with a sting'.<sup>3</sup>

However, for a number of reasons it is appropriate at this time to scrutinise more closely the performance of the SAS in these cross-border operations. First, in recent years dissenting voices have emerged. The only detailed examination of the SAS' role

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<sup>1</sup> The analysis, opinions and conclusions expressed or implied in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, the UK MOD or any other government agency.

in the Borneo campaign is Peter Dickens' *SAS: The Secret War in South-East Asia*, published originally in 1983, and republished in 1991, 2003 and in 2016.<sup>4</sup> Dickens' book remains the key text on SAS operations in Borneo. Based as it is on extensive interviews with those that actually fought in the campaign, it is both detailed and evocative. It highlights very well the great challenges that faced the SAS in their operations during Confrontation and the skill and fortitude that the troops exhibited during the campaign. But the book also presents a very positive assessment of their contribution in Borneo. In recent years a more critical perspective has been taken on the performance of the SAS, embodied especially in Alastair Mackenzie's book *Special Force*, which argues that the SAS were misused fundamentally during Confrontation.<sup>5</sup> Second, the SAS operations reports for Confrontation have now been released to the British National Archive, providing a wealth of new detail on the tactical aspects of SAS activities. This article evaluates the debate on the success of SAS cross-border operations in the light of these more recent criticisms and new evidence.

This article begins with an overview of the arguments on the success or otherwise of the SAS during Operation Claret. It then develops a framework for assessing SAS operations, focusing on the three levels of war (tactical, operational, and strategic) and the concept of 'strategic performance'. Using the levels of war, this article then assesses the effectiveness of the SAS during Confrontation. Ultimately, this article concludes that Mackenzie is right to be more sceptical of the SAS' performance during Confrontation; but he is sceptical for the wrong reasons. The tactical effectiveness of the SAS was much lower than might be expected; but this was often for reasons linked to restrictions at the operational level designed to ensure that their activities worked strategically. The strategic performance of the SAS was, nevertheless, at the time ambivalent because, special forces though they might have been, the SAS, like all of the other military forces during the campaign, could not side-step the larger strategic problems faced by Britain.

### **Defining Effectiveness**

Many sources highlight the effectiveness of SAS operations in Borneo. Peter Dickens' view of the SAS is a romantic one: an organisation operating on the frontiers that constitute 'the dividing line between civilization and barbarism', an activity which in the Borneo campaign demonstrated the 'mental effort and self-discipline [the soldier] needs to master ... in circumstances where most brains would seize solid with terror'.<sup>6</sup> For Dickens, the SAS distinguished themselves through guile, toughness, discipline, and the pursuit of excellence. He is not alone in this positive assessment. For example, Nigel McCreery concludes that: 'The campaign in Borneo is an outstanding example of the tenacity, resourcefulness and skill of the individual SAS soldier. It illustrated what a small number of properly-trained and well-motivated men can achieve.'<sup>7</sup> Raffi Gregorian, in what was the first systematic analysis of Operation Claret, argues that: 'The SAS proved to be one of the winning elements of the military campaign in Borneo.'<sup>8</sup>

At the time, the military's own analysis of the lessons of the Borneo campaign assessed the SAS as having been 'invaluable. They form a reliable agency for the intelligence machine'; and that 'their particular value' in jungle operations 'became quickly apparent'.<sup>9</sup> The SAS were also judged to have been innovative in their

approach to operations. As Walker's successor, Major General George Lea, argued, the SAS 'found that many of the techniques and tactics which they had learned during the Malayan Emergency had to be radically altered to meet the different conditions in Borneo.'<sup>10</sup> In terms of cross-border operations, Lea believed that '[c]ertain operations towards the end of the Campaign opened up a whole new field of tactics in jungle warfare'.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, one metric of success was the demand for the SAS which outstripped the available forces and necessitated the raising of an additional squadron as well as the training of elements of the Gurkhas and Parachute Regiment to perform the same tasks.<sup>12</sup> Operation Claret as a whole was judged to have been extremely effective. Walker argued later that cross-border operations 'changed the fortunes of war'.<sup>13</sup> A battalion commander who served during Confrontation noted that British operations were 'an encouraging example of military force contributing to a political situation. Instead of progressive escalation, often so inevitable, military force intelligently deployed produced conditions which helped and perhaps even promoted sensible negotiations.'<sup>14</sup> In the end, concludes Dickens, 'Victory was total. Not the sort in which the enemy is smashed to smithereens and then ground to a pulp, but the better kind that all wars ought to aim for, whereby one's objectives are limited to those that are truly vital, the force used is adequate to ensure success but not excessive, de-escalation is pursued whenever possible, and propaganda is based on truth and never strident'.<sup>15</sup> Quoting Lea, Dickens asserts that the success won against Indonesia 'was first and foremost a military one'.<sup>16</sup> Certainly, overall casualties were low as compared with the Indonesians: 590 Indonesians were killed, 222 wounded and 771 captured as opposed to security force casualties of 114 killed and 181 wounded.<sup>17</sup>

But not everyone takes this view. For example, Anthony Kemp, though keen to argue for the general value of the SAS, especially in terms of the intelligence that it gathered, acknowledges that in Borneo it might appear that: 'Squadron after squadron had rotated through the theatre, patrolled busily, lost some good men and eliminated comparatively few of the opposition. There had been no spectacular raids and in the end the campaign had simply fizzled out'.<sup>18</sup> But the most detailed critique is that of Alastair Mackenzie. Mackenzie argues that there are five general types of operations in which the SAS are likely to be involved.<sup>19</sup> Strategic operations are those aimed at the enemy's 'long term capacity and the will to sustain hostilities and at key strategic targets'. Operational-level activities are those designed to extend the conflict in depth and to support directly theatre objectives through such activities as interdiction and intelligence gathering. Tactical operations Mackenzie associates with infantry combat operations. Mackenzie then identifies two discrete types of environment where the SAS can play an important role – 'operations other than war' and 'non-combatant evacuation operations'. In the former, the SAS can demonstrate presence, support governments and non-government groups, sustain public support, and act as a stroking force. In the latter, they can play an important part in ensuring the physical security of evacuees.

On the basis of this typology, Mackenzie is highly critical of the use of the SAS in Borneo. His argument is that the SAS are best used for strategic level operations, focused on attacking such targets as enemy command and control infrastructure or engaging in sabotage. In Borneo, he argues, the SAS were locked into tactical activities focused on short-range and medium-range reconnaissance that could have been carried out by other units. The SAS, Mackenzie argues, 'did assist, in a limited

fashion, with the task of finding and fixing the enemy as well as carrying out observation and reconnaissance in the border areas and operating with the indigenous population'.<sup>20</sup> But he contends that their skills were woefully under-employed; there was a 'lack of flair and vision' in the use of the SAS in Borneo, especially under General Walker.<sup>21</sup> Under General Lea, the use of the SAS to guide regular troops for attacks as part of Operation Claret had 'a certain amount of success' by pushing the Indonesians back from the border and convincing the Indonesian Army that *Konfrontasi* could not achieve its goals.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Mackenzie argues that, whilst the tasks the SAS performed were very useful, the SAS were not essential for those activities: the organic reconnaissance elements of the infantry could have performed these equally well.<sup>23</sup> Mackenzie quotes Colonel Anthony Farrar-Hockley, Chief of Staff on Walker's HQ in Borneo, who argued of the SAS that: 'They did a useful job but it was pretty small beer you know!'<sup>24</sup>

However, the literature on strategic success raises questions regarding the utility of Mackenzie's typology, and therefore his assessment of the SAS in Borneo. First, the three levels of war that he identifies are appropriate across the whole spectrum of military activity - they are, for example, as appropriate to operations other than war as they are to conventional operations, making the last two of his five categories redundant. Second, the three levels of war are interlinked. Strategy is non-linear: there is no intrinsic reason why tactical activity cannot have important effects at the operational and strategic levels.<sup>25</sup> Gregorian notes, for example, that 'even tactical decisions could have a strategic or political effect.'<sup>26</sup> Indeed, effective strategy comprises of creating what Barry Posen calls a 'political-military means-end chain' that links what is being done at each level of war.<sup>27</sup> Thus, tactical success, for example, is pointless unless it contributes to operational and strategic success.<sup>28</sup> As the strategist Gray S. Gray notes, 'Tactical excellence in the conduct of special operations is no guarantee of strategic effectiveness'.<sup>29</sup> It is the highest level, the strategic level, that matters most - if activity does not work strategically then it does not work at all.<sup>30</sup> Here, one can distinguish between the ideas of 'strategic effect' and 'strategic performance'. All military activity has strategic effect in the sense that it has some impact on the general environment. Often however, this effect is negligible, or negative, or unintended. What matters in the employment of military power is strategic performance: the degree to which military activity moves one measurably towards the intended political outcomes.<sup>31</sup> By examining SAS activities in relation to the three levels of war, is it possible to assess with more clarity their strategic performance?

## **The SAS in Borneo**

The SAS' involvement in Borneo was one part of a broader campaign known as Confrontation (in Indonesian, *Konfrontasi*). The campaign emerged because of Indonesian opposition to the British, Malayan and Singaporean plan to create a single Federation of Malaysia comprising Malaya, the self-governing colony of Singapore and the two Crown Colonies in north Borneo: Sarawak and British North Borneo (the latter re-named Sabah). Sarawak and Sabah together comprised East Malaysia. Indonesia, which included the southern portion of Borneo (known as Kalimantan) began a multi-faceted campaign designed to destabilise the new federation and, especially, to encourage anti-Malaysian elements within Sarawak and Sabah. The first direct military challenge came in December 1962, with the launching of a revolt in

Brunei by the North Kalimantan National Army (TNKU, or *Tentara Nasional Kalimantan Utara*), which aimed to create a single north Borneo state incorporating Sarawak, British North Borneo, and Brunei. Though there was no incontrovertible evidence of Indonesian complicity, it was believed that Indonesia had some involvement, not least because of the political links between Indonesia and the TNKU leader, A. M. Azahari.<sup>32</sup> The revolt was broken quickly, although mopping up operations continued until May 1963. The remains of the TNKU and elements of the Sarawak Chinese communist party (what the security forces called the CCO, or Clandestine Communist Organisation) crossed the border into Kalimantan, where they received arms and training from the Indonesians. These irregulars became known to the security forces in East Malaysia as IBTs (Indonesian Border Terrorists). The active military stage of Indonesian Confrontation began on 12 April 1963 when cross-border irregulars attacked a police station at Tebedu in Sarawak's First Division.<sup>33</sup> Thereafter, the Indonesians maintained the fiction that raids launched from Kalimantan into East Malaysia were the actions of these 'freedom fighters' and 'volunteers', even though many raiders actually were Indonesian regulars, marines and special forces.

Neither side had an interest in escalating the conflict. British military strategy was strategically defensive. On the one hand, Britain needed to defeat Indonesian attempts to undermine Malaysia. On the other, Indonesia was a key non-aligned regional actor, and restoring positive relations as soon as possible was therefore a priority. The British strategy therefore was to prevent Indonesian success but with the minimum of damage to Indonesia's credibility, making it easier to resume relations once a political settlement was reached. For the Indonesian President, Sukarno, it was important to maintain the fiction that Indonesia was merely providing support to what otherwise were the actions of anti-colonial freedom fighters. As the conflict continued, British forces, supported by Malaysian troops and (from 1965) Australian and New Zealand forces as well, succeeded in defeating the Indonesian raids. Fears, however, that remaining on the tactical defence were handing the Indonesians the initiative led the military to press for the ability to go on the tactical offensive. Beginning in April 1964 with permission to engage in such activities as the hot pursuit of retreating raiders across the border into Kalimantan, by July 1965 authorisation had been given for 'credibly deniable offensive patrols'.<sup>34</sup> These patrols, code-named 'Operation Claret', included permission for the laying of ambushes to a depth of 3,000 yards into Kalimantan. Progressively, the depth of operations was extended to 5,000, 10,000 and occasionally 20,000 yards.<sup>35</sup>

Tactically, British and allied operations appeared extremely successful. Few Indonesian cross-border operations succeeded and British and allied losses were very low, especially in relation to the damage inflicted on the Indonesians. Over time, the number of Indonesian cross-border raids dropped off significantly.<sup>36</sup> Strategically, the lack of Indonesian success protracted the conflict allowing internal instability in Indonesia to manifest itself in more extreme forms. On the evening of 30 September/1 October 1965 a coup was attempted in Indonesia. This began a process that saw the destruction of the Indonesian communist party by the Indonesian army and the gradual sidelining of President Sukarno. A new military government under General Suharto emerged. Political rapprochement between Malaysia and Indonesia took place, culminating in the ratification on August 11 of the Bangkok Accords which ended the conflict on terms favourable to Malaysia.<sup>37</sup>

## *SAS forces*

Allied forces in Borneo were commanded by the Director of Borneo Operations (DOBOPS), who commanded all of the military forces in the theatre. From late 1962 to March 1965 this was Major General Walter Walker; from March 1965 to August 1966 this was Major General George Lea.<sup>38</sup> These forces primarily were British, but also included troops from Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand. The latter two contributed their own SAS forces to the campaign. Walker was the crucial architect of the overall concept for the defence of Borneo. Flying into theatre in December 1962 he penned his 'ingredients for success' - five (later six) principles to guide the employment of military forces in defeating the Indonesians: unified operations; timely and accurate information; speed, mobility and flexibility; security of friendly bases; domination of the jungle; and winning hearts and minds.<sup>39</sup> Military assessment at the time noted that '[b]y virtue of their organisation, equipment and training' the SAS deployed in Borneo might be 'well suited' to roles including surveillance of the frontier where, by virtue of the terrain, it was difficult to use conventional forces; the winning of hearts and minds of the local population, especially through the provision of medical aid; the training of local irregulars; the harassing and shadowing of strong enemy forces; and the destruction of weak enemy forces.<sup>40</sup>

22 Regiment SAS was composed in 1963 of two individual squadrons (A and D), each of 60 to 80 men, with a third, B Squadron, formed during Confrontation. A and D squadron each completed four tours (normally of four months) in Borneo. B Squadron, which was raised and trained from January to October 1964, completed two tours. Each squadron was composed usually of four troops, each of 16 men plus command elements. Each troop was composed of patrols, usually of four men. The squadron was the smallest sub-unit of the SAS able to support sustained operations.<sup>41</sup> The patrol comprised the smallest unit for tactical operations. Four men was believed to be the best compromise between stealth and combat power and for the requisite breadth of skills (including a radio operator, medic and language specialist).<sup>42</sup>

## *Pattern of Deployment*

Initially, Walker did not envisage a role for the SAS in his campaign. Whilst today, the use of such special forces as the SAS for dispersed clandestine operations on enemy territory might seem a fairly obvious one, the context then was different. The SAS had been disbanded at the end of the Second World War. They had been recreated during the Malayan Emergency. However there, the SAS had worked in troop strength from firm bases and were largely devoted to finding and destroying communists and their camps. There was little need to consider self-protection because the communists posed a limited threat to trained troops.<sup>43</sup> SAS involvement in Borneo came as the result of active lobbying by the commanding officer of the SAS, Lieutenant Colonel John Woodhouse. Once deployed, the SAS role during Confrontation went through six phases of employment.<sup>44</sup>

In the first phase, which covered the short period after A squadron was called forward to Singapore in January 1963, the regiment was held in reserve. Shaped by his experiences in Malaya, Walker envisaged the squadron in the role of a parachute reserve for the recapture, in the event of an Indonesian attack, of forward landing

strips. However, having convinced Walker to include the SAS in his campaign, Woodhouse then continued his lobbying efforts in order to obtain for the regiment a mode of employment that he felt better suited their diverse skills. Making Walker aware of the SAS' Malay language skills and radio capabilities, he convinced him that the regiment could make a more substantial contribution.<sup>45</sup>

The second phase encompassed January to March 1963. On the basis of Woodhouse's recommendations, the SAS were able to provide a solution to two particular problems in the border areas. First, because of poor communications along the border regions and the lack of a police and government administrative presence in these areas, it proved difficult to obtain intelligence, which made frontier surveillance problematic. Without the manpower to deploy troops across the whole of the frontier to report on enemy incursions, the use of the SAS in an 'eyes and ears' role could make an important contribution to Walker's situational awareness.<sup>46</sup>

Second, there was question of the loyalties of the indigenous population. The CCO was an almost exclusively Chinese organisation, but the Chinese were a minority, albeit a substantial one. The indigenous peoples, made of such groups as Land Dyaks, Ibans, Kenyahs, Tagal Muruts, Kelabits and Nomadic Punans, made up 49% of the population of Sarawak and 61% in Sabah. The CCO recognised that in order to make any real headway it had to generate support amongst these tribes. At the same time, these tribes straddled the border between East Malaysia and Kalimantan: indeed, for these tribes, with land and communal links on both sides, the border often meant little.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, a second key role for the SAS was found in classic hearts and minds activities: visiting border kampongs (villages) in an effort to bolster support for Malaysia, and to increase their resistance to CCO and Indonesian propaganda efforts. In this they were helped by the efforts of John Warne, a former Sabah policeman and Mr Tom Harrison, Curator of the Sarawak Museum, who had a long association with local Sarawakians. These two roles were mutually reinforcing: building a positive relationship with the local population made it much more likely that they would pass on useful information to the security forces. To perform these tasks, by March 1963 the whole of A Squadron was deployed, and lived in, the border kampongs, covering the border in four man patrols.<sup>48</sup>

The third phase of employment spanned the period from April to September 1963, which was one of rising tensions with Indonesia and deterioration in the border situation. Because of this, the SAS were forced to move out of the kampongs and to live instead in the jungle to avoid the prospect of being compromised. Because of the risks posed by the shortages in infantry, A Squadron was deployed at this time in troop strength. Their intelligence gathering and hearts and minds activities were augmented during this period by a third role. The decision was taken to raise a force of auxiliaries from the indigenous tribes, to be called the Border Scouts. Whilst Gurkhas were heavily involved in the actual training of these forces, the SAS' strong association with the border tribes made them crucial to the process of raising, organising and supervising them.<sup>49</sup>

The fourth phase of SAS employment took place from September 1963 to July 1964.<sup>50</sup> A squadron was replaced by D squadron in December 1963. The Fourth and Fifth Divisions of Sarawak and the Interior Residency of Sabah seemed to be particularly vulnerable, and so the SAS were concentrated in those areas. With more



regular infantry available to respond to Indonesian incursions, D squadron was able to operate in three or four man patrols. Their tasks included the reporting of enemy infiltrations; the harassing of Indonesian raiders as they withdrew towards the borders; 'hearts and minds' and the collection of intelligence from the border tribes; the construction of helicopter landing zones near border crossing points to facilitate the swift deployment of infantry; and the collection of topographical information.<sup>51</sup>

The fifth phase of employment was from September 1964 to March 1966. As the records note: 'Because of an urgent requirement for a sophisticated reconnaissance and special offensive force, the squadron of 22 SAS was redeployed in the First Division'.<sup>52</sup> These reconnaissance and 'special offensive' activities were those required by Operation Claret. The final phase commenced in July 1966. After the withdrawal of B Squadron in March 1966, D squadron return in July, but engaged mainly in training with the occasional internal security operation.<sup>53</sup>

### **The tactical effectiveness of the SAS**

Tactics comprises the level at which battles and engagements are fought. In the period in which the SAS were involved in Operation Claret, which covers September 1964 to February 1966, the records detail a total of 116 SAS operations.<sup>54</sup> In orthodox accounts of SAS operations, the period of their involvement in Operation Claret would seem to be one focused on ambush operations. For example, Tom Pocock notes that, with the initiation of Claret 'instead of watching and counting, they would be given permission to begin interdiction: ambushing tracks and rivers and setting 'booby-traps' where it was known that only raiders would pass'.<sup>55</sup> The SAS' records show that, in reality, SAS operations comprised of two main categories of activity: first, reconnaissance operations (97 operations); and second, ambushes (18 operations). The former included missions to find such specific targets as tracks, villages and enemy camps or to establish observation posts to watch villages or particular lines of communication. The latter included operations designed to attack Indonesian military forces. The remaining operation was a hearts and minds mission. In terms of the pattern of operation, the highest number were grouped from January to July 1965, the number of operations tailing off significantly after that date (see Table 1). Of the 97 reconnaissance operations, 44 were rated in the SAS records as successes; 36 were failures; and 17 were partial successes, translating into percentages respectively of 45%, 37% and 18%. Where the operations were failures or only partial successes, there tended to be a number of recurring causes identified. Poor intelligence, in which the target was not at the specified location or could not be found (or where in one case the SAS patrol was inserted by helicopter into the wrong place) was cited in 30% of cases. Being compromised (in which the patrol was actually spotted by locals or Indonesians, or was believed to have been, or where the patrol had left tracks likely to be seen) was cited in 34% of cases. Difficulties in terrain (such as flooding, cliffs, or dense jungle) created a range of problems including being unable to get to the designated target, or taking too long to get there, or being unable to establish an observation post. These problems were cited in 26% of those operations that were not wholly successful. Finally, communications problems, generally being the failure, often because of rain, of patrol radios, was a factor in 6% of cases. In a few cases, more than one reason was given for failure - for example radio problems and possible compromise.

### **Table 1: Pattern of SAS Claret Operations**

#### **1964**

September: 3 recces

October: 5 recces; 1 ambush

November: 1 ambush ongoing from October

December: 6 recces

#### **1965**

January: 16 recces (including 4 ongoing from December)

February: 14 recces (1 ongoing from January)

March: 9 recces (6 ongoing from February)

April: 19 recces (1 ongoing from March); 5 ambushes

May: 7 recces (4 ongoing from April); 3 ambushes

June: 13 recces; 1 ambush; 1 hearts and minds.

July: 11 recces (3 ongoing from June); 1 hearts and minds ongoing from June; 2  
ambushes

August: 4 recces (3 ongoing from July; 3 ambushes (1 ongoing from July)

September: 1 recce; 1 ambush ongoing from August

October: 5 recces

November: 2 recces, (1 ongoing from October); 1 ambush

December: 3 ambushes

#### **1966**

January: 1 recce; 3 ambushes (1 ongoing from December)

February: 1 recce ongoing from January; 1 ambush

In relation to the 18 ambushes, there were seven successes; ten failures; and one partial success, making 39% successes; 46% failures; and 15% partial successes. The largest factor accounting for failures in ambushes was where the enemy did not appear (36% of cases). Other factors included being compromised (18%); terrain and/or weather making it impossible to get to the ambush area (18%); poor intelligence, in which the target ambush position did not exist (18%); and technical failures (9%) including the failure of claymore mines to detonate.

The point to be drawn from this is that SAS operations were not, in and of themselves, overwhelmingly successful tactically. Indeed, the basis on which operations were coded even as partial successes is interesting. Generally, operations were deemed partial successes rather than failures because, although the primary mission had failed, useful topographical information was obtained or because negative information (i.e. that the target was not in a given position) could be construed as useful in narrowing down its actual position. But on that wide basis of course, every operation might be construed as a partial success, and the utility of the information gleaned from such operations could only really be determined at a later date. David Charters' assertion that 'the SAS were more skilled in jungle field craft than the line battalions (with the

possible exception of Gurkha units); their four-man patrols could move and observe without detection' may be correct in the first part; but the second is debateable - it is clear that SAS operations often were detected.<sup>56</sup> Equally, Gregorian's comment that 'CLARET operations were almost always successful in tactical terms' evidently was not strictly the case for the SAS.<sup>57</sup>

Indeed, this topographical or negative information might actually be of very limited use. Here, it is illuminating to turn to a specific case study - in this instance the SAS' search for a suspected IBT/CCO training camp at or around the village of Batu Hitam. Dickens' book mentions several times the efforts made to find the camp.<sup>58</sup> Many operations were launched to find it, but none were successful. In many respects, for Dickens the search for Batu Hitam becomes a metaphor for the quiet determination of the SAS, who return repeatedly to the task of finding the camp despite the difficulties. Their adversaries 'like the Irish, changed the question when somebody looked like solving it'.<sup>59</sup> But the attempts from February 1965 to November 1965 to find Batu Hitam also illustrate the tactical futility of many of the SAS' activities.

### ***In search of Batu Hitam***

The attempt to find Batu Hitam comprised a total of nine different operations, ranging from reconnaissance by single patrols through to Operation Red Fort, which involved a whole SAS squadron. The vicissitudes experienced by these operations ran the whole gamut of themes identified in the preceding discussion and demonstrate why it was so difficult even for such elite troops as the SAS to succeed more often in their operations in Borneo. The operation also demonstrates that even operations coded as successes or partial successes might deliver very little actual tactical gain.

The search for the suspected IBT camp at Batu Hitam seems to have been prompted by two developments. First, it was assessed in 1965 that the Lundu district of First Division was under growing threat from cross-border attacks by Indonesian-sponsored irregular forces. In the context of Operation Claret, with its focus on seizing the initiative in the border area, it made sense, therefore, to find the point of origin of these attacks, presumably in preparation for a larger attack upon it. Second, a deserter seems to have identified the existence of an IBT camp in the area of Kampong Batu Hitam which was presumed to be the base for these attacks.

The first operation was a week-long reconnaissance launched on February 11 1965 by a patrol from B Squadron, augmented by two officers from D Squadron that were under instruction. This operation was successful, in that it found the kampong, but there seemed to be no IBT or any other Indonesian security forces there. On the fifth day, the patrol stopped a local in the nearby *ladang* (plantation). The local was 'absolutely petrified by the presence of the British', and told the patrol that there were no Indonesian forces of any kind at Batu Hitam. Nor did there seem to be other compelling evidence of the presence of such forces. Nevertheless, the patrol commander believed that the local was lying about the presence of Indonesian troops in the kampong.<sup>60</sup> A second patrol, this time from D Squadron, was thus sent on another reconnaissance back to Batu Hitam in order to confirm whether there were any enemy forces in the area. This crossed the border on 28 February and returned on the 7 March. On 4 March, the patrol was compromised by a hunting group of three locals from Batu Hitam. Unlike the previous encounter, these seemed unafraid of the

patrol and, indeed, quite relaxed. But the patrol's conversation with them seemed to confirm the intelligence obtained by the previous patrol: the hunters said that there were no Indonesian security forces or IBTs in the Batu Hitam area.<sup>61</sup> Having been compromised, the patrol then decided to withdraw in case the locals informed the Indonesian army. Overall, the patrol concluded that, unless local IBTs had somehow thoroughly rehearsed all of the locals on what to say if they ran into British forces, it seemed that the kampong itself did not contain the sought for base.<sup>62</sup>

Having failed in efforts focused directly on the kampong, in April a different approach was attempted. From 17 to the 20 April, a patrol of D Squadron made use of a prisoner who had claimed to have come from the IBT camp.<sup>63</sup> The prisoner identified positively his crossing place, saying that there was a large camp four hours due west – he and his interpreter were then evacuated. At the point at which the track crossed the ridge path there seemed to be an enemy observation post and evidence that an enemy force had camped there perhaps a month before. In general, it seemed from the evidence that the Batu Hitam training camp was somewhere in grid reference 5585, and that another reconnaissance was required to find it.<sup>64</sup> Another patrol from D Squadron went into Kalimantan from 28 April to the 10 May. Sadly, however, this next reconnaissance still could not find the IBT training camp. There were some signs of activity from the locals but there were no signs at all of any military presence in the area. It was concluded, therefore, that the Batu Hitam IBT training camp could not be positioned south of the main river, east of Easting 57, or north of the main track along the ridge. On that basis, the patrol recommended yet another reconnaissance, but this time to search the area east and northeast of kampong Batu Hitam.<sup>65</sup>

This next reconnaissance, the fifth, took place from the 2 June to 13 June 1965. By this stage, A Squadron had taken over from D Squadron, and so it was a patrol of the former that undertook the operation. The mission was to establish the layout of the camp that was presumed still to be near Batu Hitam. This patrol, like the others, recorded various amounts of topographical information and commented on the general lie of the land, rivers, game, ladangs and hunting tracks.<sup>66</sup> But there were no signs of any military tracks in the area, and upon questioning a lone Dyak, it seemed clear that there was no IBT camp in the immediate vicinity. Ironically, the only indications found of a military camp were those of a previous SAS stop-over, given away by a couple of tins found in the area.<sup>67</sup> Overall, the patrol commander took the view that there was no IBT camp in the area, and that no more patrols should be sent until there was more intelligence.<sup>68</sup>

Three months passed with no further attempt to find the Batu Hitam IBT camp. But subversive activity was increasing in the Lundu area, placing even more of a premium on finding the presumed base used by the cross-border raiders. Commander West Brigade tasked A Squadron with finding the source of the raids and '[i]n view of the priority placed on the operation by the Commander West Brigade it was decided that three troops and Sqn HQ should be deployed in order to accomplish the task at an early date.'<sup>69</sup> The operation, the sixth tasked with finding Batu Hitam, was code-named 'Red Fort' and was conducted from the 10 to 29 September 1965. Given the lack of consensus on where the enemy camp might be, it was decided that the most effective way of finding the target would be to (a) use the full squadron in one operation, and (b) to focus on capturing an enemy prisoner who would then be forced to act as a guide to the suspected enemy camp. 4 Troop and 1 Troop's searches proved

to be fruitless. The presence of villagers working local ladangs made patrolling difficult and no Indonesian troops were encountered. Their presence seemed, at least, to give important negative information.<sup>70</sup> 3 Troop's patrol proved to be more eventful and also more productive. After contact with an enemy patrol, who were believed to have been alerted by a local, the patrol's radio became unserviceable which necessitated a withdrawal back to the border rendezvous. Nevertheless, on the way back, they were able to search the north bank of the Batang Ayer and here they encountered evidence 'which may well have been the outskirts of the camp concerned'.<sup>71</sup> This evidence comprised, first, of sounds which included rifle shots, pistol shots, and the sound of tins or similar being banged. But physical evidence was also encountered in the form of what was presumed to be an unmanned observation post which comprised of a large tree with access via metal spikes that acted as climbing rungs. The post commanded a good view of the river valley.<sup>72</sup> Assessing the information, it was concluded by A Squadron that it was 'probable' that 3 Troop had found the IBT camp.<sup>73</sup>

Red Fort having 'considerably reduced' the potential search area for the enemy camp, a seventh operation was launched from 15 to 26 October 1965 in order finally to find it.<sup>74</sup> As it turned out, the suspected observation post was not an observation post - Border Scouts accompanying the SAS indicated that the pegs were a method to enable locals to climb the tree and capture birds. The patrol encountered a group of eleven Chinese near the village of Tangeong. These villagers indicated that they had seen no Indonesian Army troops for three months and that they did not know exactly where Batu Hitam might be, although they thought it was far to the north. The locals seemed hostile to the patrol, and later Indonesian Army activity indicated that the patrol had probably been compromised by the villagers. It was concluded that Batu Hitam was not in the area and might instead be in the area of local ladang which had not yet been patrolled. Since the ladang was well-worked by the locals, however, any patrol was likely to be compromised and so would need to be large enough to defend itself.<sup>75</sup>

A further operation to find Batu Hitam was conducted from 15 - 20 November. The intent behind this operation was to determine a route for an assault force to the ladangs previously identified as being the likely position of Batu Hitam and to observe five grid references in order to confirm Batu Hitam's position. The patrol set up observation posts that excluded at least two of the possible grid references and which concluded that all available information seemed to establish grid reference 551859 as the camp's position. 14 armed Chinese irregulars were also spotted in the area.<sup>76</sup> This led to Operation Bed Socks - an attempt from the 6 - 16 December to establish an ambush on the track upon which the Chinese irregulars had been spotted and which was presumed to be the best route linking the Batu Hitam camp to the border. However, on the 14 December the ambush was compromised by local hunters and it withdrew. It was concluded that an ambush of this kind should only be launched when there was better information on the frequency with which the CCO were using the track.<sup>77</sup> By this stage the number of SAS operations had reduced considerably and this was the last operation conducted in relation to Batu Hitam.

In the end, the Batu Hitam training camp, which had absorbed nine SAS operations, was never found (and indeed may never actually have existed). Although with hindsight all of the operations were failures, at the time three were assessed by the SAS as successes and one as a partial success. This provides strong evidence that

even the equivocal calculations made earlier in this article on the percentage of successful SAS operations probably in hindsight overstates the actual success rate. Mackenzie might seem therefore to have a valid argument when he asserts that the SAS' focus on tactical operations was a waste of their potential. But is this really the case?

### **Strategic and Operational effectiveness**

Mackenzie defines the 'strategic use' of the SAS in terms of particular targets. But this confuses means (the tools available) with ways (the methods by which one uses those tools to achieve the desired end states). Strategy comprises the ways through which available means are disciplined to meet the desired ends.<sup>78</sup> The highest level is that of grand strategy – this may be defined as 'the process by which the appropriate instruments of power are arrayed and employed to accomplish the national interest'.<sup>79</sup> Grand strategy embraces the definition of policy objectives, alliances, allocates resources and directs the 'national effort'. The purpose of grand strategy is to provide unity of purpose and coherence to all aspects of national policy. The next level down is the military strategic level: 'the art and science of coordinating the development, deployment, and employment of military forces to achieve national security objectives'.<sup>80</sup> This is the military element of grand strategy which is concerned with developing resources, constraints, means, military objectives and end states that will support the grand strategic objectives sought.

Attacking an enemy headquarters is still, therefore, intrinsically a tactical action. Using the SAS 'strategically' should more properly describe the degree to which that tactical action serviced higher level objectives. Viewed in this way, one of the key reasons why the SAS' tactical activity seemed to be so equivocal in effect was that tactical activities reflected the constraints demanded by British strategy. To put this another way, the SAS' tactical use was heavily constrained precisely because they were being used strategically: Britain was attempting to maximise the strategic performance of its forces, even if that reduced its rates of tactical success. During Confrontation, Britain pursued a strategy of protraction: of very limited military action designed to wear out the Indonesian will to continue. British decision-makers many times explored, and then explicitly rejected, more overt uses of military force. Partly this was because Britain did not want to alienate international opinion. The priority placed by Britain on international opinion meant that 'any significant action' taken by the UK could only come after an Indonesian attack 'in strength' across the border.<sup>81</sup> It was concluded that Britain should avoid undeniable operations except in circumstances of a full-scale Indonesian attack or where such operations would be of the kind unlikely to result in Indonesian retaliation.<sup>82</sup> But the constraints on operations were also a pragmatic response to the impact that such action might have on Indonesian conflict termination calculations. As the UK Chiefs of Staff concluded, it was imperative to avoid the sort of military operations that might 'permanently alienate the Indonesian people and make an eventual settlement with his [Sukarno's] successor more difficult'.<sup>83</sup>

This had dramatic consequences at the operational level. The operational level is associated with a specific theatre of operations as a whole: it is the level at which campaigns (linked series of operations) are planned, conducted and sustained.<sup>84</sup> It provides the crucial link in organising tactical activities so that they reflect strategic

level objectives. The key function of the operational level is to sequence and coordinate tactical actions such that they meet strategic level imperatives. In that sense, the true measure of the effectiveness of the SAS in Borneo is not what the outcomes were of each tactical operation, but whether or not, cumulatively, these operations met the needs of the operational commander, the Director of Borneo Operations.

The whole basis of ensuring that British cross-border operations should remain deniable and, as far as possible, secret was to limit the undesirable political consequences. As the Chiefs of Staff went on to note in December 1965: 'It follows that military action will only serve its purpose if we are able to exploit it politically'; in consequence, any British military action should 'hurt but not cripple' and it should not encourage Indonesian retaliation.<sup>85</sup> These ideas ran to the heart of the UK Ministry of Defence's definition of what constituted a deniable operation: an operation 'in which the Indonesians cannot prove that the border has been crossed. It is moreover one which Soekarno, on the assumption that he does not wish for escalation, can afford without unacceptable loss of face, to treat no more seriously than present activities'.<sup>86</sup> This approach was reflected in the so-called 'Golden Rules' that Walker developed for Claret operations. These rules included that: every operation could be authorised only by DOBOPS; that only trained and tested troops could be used; that civilian lives could not be risked; that every operation had to be thoroughly rehearsed; that operations should be conducted with maximum secrecy; and that no soldier should be captured, alive or dead.<sup>87</sup> Taking this view, the problems in the tactical success of the SAS were a direct reflection of the regiment's proper integration at the operational level. For example, the large numbers of tactical failures caused by being compromised stemmed from the fact that operational level imperatives required that civilians should not be killed, and that risks to the small SAS patrols should be minimised to avoid incidents that would undermine the secrecy of Claret. It could be concluded, therefore, that SAS operations were indeed, very successful at the operational level. But there are also problems with this assessment.

First, even if Claret itself were successful operationally, one immediate difficulty that we face is that we do not know what the direct effect was on the Indonesians of specifically SAS operations. That there was an awareness on the part of the Indonesian troops that the SAS formed part of the forces attacking them is indicated by a message, encountered by an SAS patrol, that had been left carved into one of trees and which read: 'Go no further winged soldiers of England'.<sup>88</sup> However, without detailed access to Indonesian sources it remains impossible to know whether or not SAS operations had any particular impact beyond the more nebulous effects generated by Operation Claret as a whole.

Second, could the operations performed by the SAS actually have been just as easily performed by other troops in the theatre? This is not an easy question to answer. Peter de la Billiere, commander in Borneo of D Squadron, saw his forces achievements in terms of being a force multiplier in which SAS intelligence was exploited by regular and Gurkha infantry creating a 'combination of good intelligence and fast reaction, running in parallel with the hearts-and-minds campaign'.<sup>89</sup> Certainly, over time, elements of the Gurkhas and Parachute regiment formed independent companies that performed the same tasks as the SAS. Moreover, Claret operations were performed eventually by units from ordinary line regiments.<sup>90</sup> On the other hand, if one accepts

that the SAS were not, in fact, likely to be employed in Borneo on the sorts of wider activities that Mackenzie envisages, then their use during Operation Claret was not wasteful. Moreover, given their early experience along the borders of Borneo and in their contacts with the locals, they provided a useful repository of knowledge and understanding. That an additional squadron was raised during the conflict and that New Zealand and Australian SAS units were also deployed gives some indication that they might well have had, or have been perceived to have had, some unique qualities.

Third, however, and most crucially, at the time it was not clear that Claret itself was especially decisive. At the operational level, which sat during Confrontation at the level of the Commander-in-Chief, Far East (CINCFE) and in Borneo with the Director of Borneo Operations, there was actually a push for an escalation in the use of military means. During the conflict, Walker believed that deniable operations would always have a limited shelf life: they might 'achieve some delay and disruption of enemy activity' but eventually Britain would need 'to carry out more extensive operations to take away his [the Indonesian] initiative effectively'.<sup>91</sup> This led both DOBOPS and CINCFE to push for military escalation. Therefore, at the strategic level, even the strategic performance of SAS operations was a matter of debate. By October 1965, the Commander-in-Chief, Far East was arguing that 'the measures taken under our present military policy of containment have had some tactical success but have had no strategic effect in that they have not changed Indonesia's aims'.<sup>92</sup> Precisely because operations in Borneo were so constrained by political considerations, they could inflict only very limited damage. By the second half of 1965, with economic problems troubling Wilson's Labour government, and with Singapore's secession from the Federation compromising future use of the bases there, Britain had moved to a position where it wished to initiate negotiations with Indonesia. Only because of powerful negative reactions from its allies, especially, the US, did Britain persevere long enough to reap the rewards of the August 11 1966 peace deal.<sup>93</sup> Therefore, whilst the operational effectiveness of the SAS was high, their strategic performance at the time was questionable.

But could the SAS have been used differently to more effect? In reality, the fact that the operational level commanders were at the time ambivalent about the impact of Claret also led to developments that undermine Mackenzie's arguments that the theatre commanders, especially Walker, were unimaginative in their approach to the use of special forces. Several times during the conflict, reviews were undertaken by CINCFE or DOBOPS of the possible scope for more robust military action; a process that involved consideration of a much more ambitious use of Special Forces operations. For example, in early 1964 CINCFE, reflecting the views of Walker, forwarded to the Ministry of Defence a review of potential new military options. Amidst a variety of air and maritime operations, the review also included consideration of commando-type raids against the Natuna and Rhio islands and Special Forces raids on such targets as Indonesian naval shipping in harbours; airfields and military aircraft; radars and radio stations; and oil installations.<sup>94</sup> Another review in January 1965 explored options that included commando raids against Indonesian mounting bases near West Malaysia.<sup>95</sup> In October 1965, the Commander-in-Chief, Far East advocated a radical plan for graduated military escalation. Amongst the options that he advocated preparing for were 'such operations as small covert and sabotage raids'.<sup>96</sup> Consideration was also given in 1962, 1963 and again in 1965 to schemes designed to fan the flames of regional secession in Indonesia.<sup>97</sup>



Indeed, Walker was keen on expanding British operations into the realm of undeniable operations. These operations would include specific attempts to raid Indonesian bases and ships, but also psychological activities designed to intensify the 'war of nerves' against Indonesia.<sup>98</sup> All of these activities offered potential roles for the SAS. Indeed, over time, Britain did develop a range of contingency plans covering some of these options in case of Indonesian escalation.<sup>99</sup> But generally, theatre-level aspirations for a more robust use of force, including by Special Forces, foundered on strategic-level political imperatives to avoid antagonising unnecessarily international opinion and to avoid in the long term alienating Indonesia.

Thus the scope of SAS operations was not limited by a lack of imagination on the part of the theatre-level military commanders: it was limited by what strategic-level decision makers believed was consonant with British objectives and what, in consequence, they were willing to sanction. Civilian casualties, or heavy SAS casualties, or perhaps even an operation in which SAS soldiers were taken prisoner, would violate the principle of deniability with all of the political consequences that would follow. Operations that would not remain secret could not be undertaken 'until the 'military situation patently demanded it and it could be represented to world opinion as self-defence'.<sup>100</sup> These conditions did not arise.

## Conclusions

The SAS' role in Operation Claret thus paints a complex picture of success and failure. SAS activities were far from being an unmitigated triumph. Tactically, the SAS' own assessment of their operations indicates that only a minority were unqualified successes. Moreover, as the Batu Hitam case study also illustrates, many of the successes and partial successes were, with the benefit of hindsight, actually failures.

But the tactical difficulties experienced by the SAS were often a function of restrictions with political origins. These restrictions were believed necessary in order to make Special Forces activities effective at the operational level of war. The argument, in consequence, that the SAS was used too tactically and that it would have been better used against strategic targets does not really hold water. SAS operations were often unsuccessful tactically because they were subject to the constraints believed necessary to promote effective strategic performance. SAS raids deep into Indonesian territory to attack their adversary's command and control infrastructure may perhaps have had more strategic *effect*, in terms of having a higher profile and larger consequences. But their strategic *performance* would have been lower because they would have risked the very outcomes that British strategy sought to avoid - international condemnation; escalation; a hardening of Indonesian political will; and the poisoning in the long-term of Anglo-Indonesian relations. Nor was it the case that theatre-level commanders failed to think imaginatively about alternative uses for the SAS. Such individuals as Walker did consider alternatives and often advocated them. But strategic-level decision makers rejected the call for operations that risked breaching the principle of deniability. In doing so, the British use of the SAS was very much 'strategic' in the sense that the focus was on ensuring that the SAS facilitated, rather than obstructed, the attainment of British objectives during Confrontation.

But what the SAS experience in Borneo also demonstrates is that no amount of artistry at the operational level in the use of Special Forces can compensate for weaknesses in strategy. The challenges facing the SAS at the tactical level were conditioned by British attempts to ensure the proper disciplining at the operational level of military means to political purposes. But the strategic level difficulties faced by Britain - the problem, for example, that Britain wished to limit to the Indonesians the costs of the conflict in order to promote the chances of positive long-term Anglo-Indonesian relations - made it much more difficult to use military force in decisive ways. In those circumstances the SAS' impact was always likely to be ambiguous. As Borneo illustrates, capable though Special Forces might be, their tactics cannot be made to substitute for strategy.

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- <sup>69</sup> TNA, WO305/4294, Ops/90/102, 'Report on Operation Red Fort 10 Sep to 29 Sep by 'A' Sqn 22 SAS Regt - to Locate Batu Hitam Training Camp', 3 October 1965.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>72</sup> TNA, WO305/4294, 'Op Red Fort - Intelligence Info', Annex C to Ops/90/102, 3 October 1965.
- <sup>73</sup> TNA, WO305/4294, Ops/90/102, 'Report on Operation Red Fort 10 Sep to 29 Sep by 'A' Sqn 22 SAS Regt - to Locate Batu Hitam Training Camp', 3 October 1965.
- <sup>74</sup> TNA, WO 305/4294, Ops/90/107, 'Report on 6 Troop and Border Scout Operation to Locate Batu Hitam Training Camp', 6 November 1965.
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- <sup>76</sup> TNA, WO 305/4294, Ops/90/112, 'Report on Patrol Red Zulu to Find Batu Hitam Training Camp', 29 November 1965.
- <sup>77</sup> TNA, WO 305/4294, Ops/90/115, 'Operation Bed Socks: Report on Ambush of Track to the West of LZ 148, GR 6298874', 29 December 1965.
- <sup>78</sup> Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17.

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- <sup>79</sup> Dennis M. Drew and Donald M. Snow, *Making Strategy: An Introduction to National Security Processes and Problems* (Maxwell Airforce Base, AL: Air University Press. 1988), 27.
- <sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.
- <sup>81</sup> TNA, DEFE 4/179, Confidential Annex to COS 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting 1965, 'Meeting with Lord Head', 5 January 1965.
- <sup>82</sup> TNA, CAB 148/19, OPD(65)1, 'Indonesia: Memo by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations', 8 January 1965.
- <sup>83</sup> TNA, DEFE 5/156, COS 11/65, 'Military Measures to Counter Indonesian Confrontation', 13 January 1965; TNA, CAB 148/18, OPD(65) 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting, 14 January 1965.
- <sup>84</sup> Joint Doctrine Publication 0-01, *UK Defence Doctrine, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* (Shrivenham: Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, 2014), 20.
- <sup>85</sup> TNA, DEFE 5/164, Annex A to COS 219/65, 30 December 1965.
- <sup>86</sup> TNA, DEFE 13/385, COSSEA 143, MoD UK to CINCFE, 1 July 1964.
- <sup>87</sup> Pocock, *Fighting General*, 197; General Sir Peter de la Billiere, *Looking for Trouble: SAS to Gulf Command* (London: Harper Collins, 1995), 243.
- <sup>88</sup> <http://wingedsoldiers.co.uk/sas-borneo/>
- <sup>89</sup> de la Billiere, *Looking for Trouble*, 246.
- <sup>90</sup> See, for example, Ralph Harrison and John Heron, *Jungle Conflict: The Durham Light Infantry in Borneo 1965-66* (Sunderland: Business Education Publishers, 2007), 51-80.
- <sup>91</sup> TNA, DEFE 5/164, Annex A to COS 219/65, 30 December 1965.
- <sup>92</sup> TNA, DEFE 13/475, Annex A to COS 176/65, 'Measures to Counter Indonesian Confrontation', 21 October 1965.
- <sup>93</sup> David Easter, *Britain and the Confrontation with Indonesia, 1960-66* (London: Taurus Academic Studies, 2004), 152-155.
- <sup>94</sup> TNA, DEFE 5/147, Annex A to COS 19/64, 'Military Measures to Counter Indonesian Confrontation', 21 January 1964.
- <sup>95</sup> TNA, DEFE 4/179, Part I to COS 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting/65, 'Military Measures to Counter Indonesian Confrontation', 12 January 1965.
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- <sup>97</sup> See David Easter, 'British and Malaysian Covert Support for Rebel Movements in Indonesia during the 'confrontation', 1963-66', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (1999), 195-208.
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- <sup>100</sup> TNA, DEFE 11/591, Extract from COS 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting/65, 'Graduated Military Options in Kalimantan', 6 April 1965.